

JURY DUTY SCAM: A jury scam is currently working throughout the United States, growing at an alarming rate. It was reported on CNN this week.

In this scam, the caller identifies him/herself as a representative of the court. The caller tells victim that s/he has failed to report for jury duty, and that a bench warrant was issued against them for their arrest. The caller often tells the victim this could all be “just a misunderstanding” or some sort of clerical error that can be straightened out on the phone. The caller then asks for personal and financial information, such as date of birth, social security number, credit card numbers, bank account numbers, and so forth. The caller asserts that the information is necessary to verify the claim and threatens that the failure to provide the information will result in an immediate execution of the arrest warrant.

Family members who receive these calls are especially vulnerable to coercion. The callers use threats against the victim’s career and other persuasive measures to obtain the information, and stress that the issue is current and urgent.

In another version of the scam, the perpetrators mail what appear to be jury forms that seek the personal information described above. As of today, September 30, the scam has appeared in at least Arizona, Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington state.

Our Court does not call jurors (or anyone else) asking for social security numbers and other private information. If a person fails to appear for jury duty, the Court will send a “failure to appear” letter to the person, asking them to tell us, in writing, why they did not appear. Our Jury Management personnel may call the morning of the assigned jury duty. Significantly, our Jury Management personnel do not call after a juror has missed a jury date.

Any person receiving such calls should record the perpetrator’s phone number (if Caller ID is available) and immediately report the contact to the U.S. Attorney. If you have questions regarding the jury process for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia, call the Jury Administrator in the Clerk’s Office at 304-347-3058.

Don’t Be A Victim of the Jury Duty Scam!

- * Be skeptical of callers who threaten arrest for missing jury duty unless the consumer provides specific personal information to the caller.
- * Do not comply with any request to “verify information” such as a Social Security number.
- * Do not agree to send the caller any written information for review.
- * NEVER give out bank, credit card or Social Security information over the phone.
- * Screen calls. Let the answering machine pick up calls from unknown callers.
- * If you have questions regarding jury duty, call our Jury Management Office at 304-347-3058.